



DEBORAH THOMAS
WONDERS WHETHER
MANAGEMENT IS NATURE
OR NURTURE.



The people game

People management is a key part of the development of the job of a treasurer and applies at many levels – not just staff management but managing upwards, politics and diplomacy, one off projects etc. It is often an area that many professionals – including treasurers – are thrown into rather than trained for in advance and for many it is a sink or swim environment.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

People by their nature can vary on a day to day basis. Different external factors can affect both you and your staff's mood – a bad journey, sleepless night with children, stress, etc. We cannot mind read, but a few basic principles can be applied. Most people like to be treated with respect and given a reasonable amount of autonomy. You need to get to know your staff in order to assess what makes them tick. Social evenings or team events can help in achieving this. Trust is a key element if you are really going to get people to open up to you. Encouragement, support and honesty are highly valued attributes in a manager. Think about how you like to be managed. Personality is a key influencer in this. People leave people – your management of staff has a major influence on their esteem and feeling about the group. 360° feedbacks are a way of finding out what your staff are really thinking.

Develop your staff through training and coaching. This will not only benefit the individual but also you by being able to delegate more to them and free up your time for other roles or projects. It also demonstrates your ability to develop people.

Ensure that you thank your staff. Praise them and reward them for effort as much as

achievement. Even some failures can be a positive in terms of the learning acquired.

On poor performance, it is best

to try and address the behaviour early on. Find out what the underlying issues are, as these will determine how the poor performance should be managed and dealt with. Liaise with HR to ensure you follow the correct procedures.

It is, however, also important to recognise your own traits. If you do not enjoy people management then find roles that play to your strengths. Enjoying your job is often about recognising what you are good at and then playing to those strengths.

PEER MANAGEMENT How you work alongside your peers can have a great influence on your career. How do they see you? Do they see you as a future leader, are you someone they can approach with issues or seek your views? The ability to work well alongside your staff and, where appropriate, to help motivate or support them to achieve common goals does aid in developing your management skills – but be sure that it doesn't appear to be patronising. Obviously politics and competition can play a role here, so one needs to be sure of each individual's agenda. The questions raised are equally relevant when considering your peers. Are you a 'doer', supporter, ideas person – where do you/they add most value as part of a team? The importance of your ability to work in a team environment to achieve common goals must not be underestimated.

UPWARD MANAGEMENT Managing the relationship with your seniors is also an important part of learning management skills. Firstly, try to ensure you are managed in the way you wish to be managed, but also ensure

that you make the most of your relationship in order for it to develop.

Ensure that you have regular meetings with your boss, both on and off site. Get to know your boss's type – do they prefer to leave you to get on with work and just approach them when there is an issue to which you have a potential solution? Do they need a lot of information to be provided to them, are they good at sharing information with you? If your boss is detail-orientated, the more you are able to give to them the more comfortable they will feel and over time will be less demanding. However, for any presentation or meeting that you have you must remember to prepare well and have the detailed information that may be required. On the other hand, if your boss is more focussed on bigger picture scenarios, you need to ensure that you are keeping him/her informed of what is happening in your domain. As always, it's a case of 'no surprises' being foisted upon them. Whatever the management style, can you work with it? If you do not get on with your boss, it can make it very difficult to progress internally. Management style at any level can be a huge motivator and/or demotivator, both personally and for those working around you. Some people are natural managers, but the majority of us learn as we go. Making the effort to develop these skills will stand you in good stead for life. Improve on your existing skills. It is never too late to learn. Look to develop your softer skill set in conjunction with your technical experience.

Treating people with respect and honesty goes a long way to winning in management. All of our actions have consequences and thinking ahead can have a significant impact on everyone concerned.

Deborah Thomas is Head of Treasury at Michael Page International.
deborahthomas@michaelpage.com
www.michaelpage.co.uk